

Little and Hanks.—Information respecting the Government's purpose to send troops to this Territory came to the ears of two Utah men, Fernand Little and Ephraim Hanks, as early as February, 1857. Late that month they arrived with the mail at Independence, having crossed the plains under a special arrangement with the postmaster of Salt Lake City; Hockaday and Magraw having failed to properly close their contract. Through the non-arrival of the mails in Utah, Mr. Kimball had not learned, up to the time that Little and Hanks left home, of the acceptance of his bid by the Government. Immediately upon receipt of the notice, preparations to begin proceedings under the new contract were vigorously pushed; so much so that the establishment by the Express Company of a mail station on the Upper Platte was reported to the Government by Indian Agent Twiss, in the Deer Creek region, as a foreeful "Mormon" invasion of the Sioux Indian reservation.

Mayor Smoot Brings the Tidings.—The news of the coming of the troops was brought



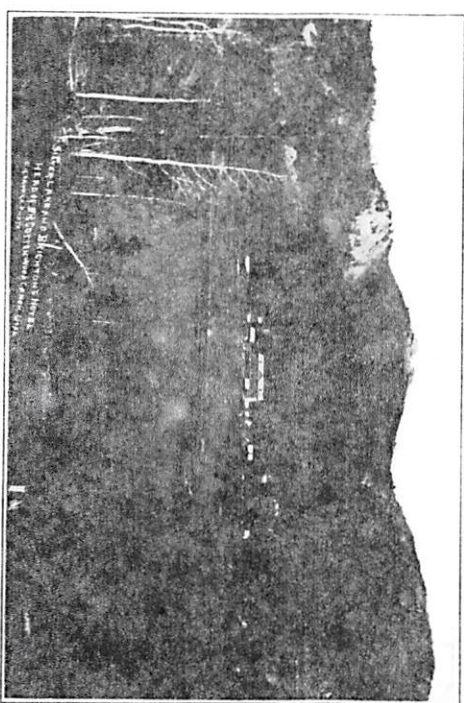
MAYOR SMOOT

to Utah by Abraham O. Smoot, Mayor of Salt Lake City. While in the East as an agent of the Y. N. Company, he learned from Fernand Little at Fort Laramie, and afterwards at the office of a Government contractor in Kansas City, that Brigham Young had been superseded as Governor; that a new set of Federal officers had been appointed for the Territory; and that an army would accompany them to the Utah capital. He also ascertained that certain freight wagons belonging to Contractor William H. Russell, and which he had encountered on the plains, were loaded with army supplies, a portion of the equipment of the Expedition. These reports were confirmed at Independence, where the postmaster refused to deliver the mails for the West, stating that he was acting under orders from Washington.

Accepting this statement as conclusive, Mayor Smoot and Nicholas Groesbeck, the latter in charge of the Y. N. Company's business at the eastern end of the route, decided to break up the recently established mail stations and move the

outfits westward. The Mayor, to avoid excitement, at first proceeded leisurely, gathering up the property as he went. On the 12th of July he reached Fort Laramie, and from that point set out with all speed for Salt Lake City. The distance was over five hundred miles, but in a light spring wagon drawn by four fast horses, he and his companions, Judson L. Stoddard and Orrin Porter Rockwell, accomplished the journey in five days and three hours, arriving at their destination on the evening of July 23rd. The news they brought was delivered to Governor Young about mid-day of the 24th.

The Silver Lake Celebration.—It was the tenth anniversary of the arrival of the Pioneers in Salt Lake Valley, and the Governor, with about twenty-six hundred people, residents of the capital and neighboring settlements, were in the midst of a peaceful celebration of that event, when the word came that an army was marching to Utah to put down a rebellion against the Government. The celebration was held



SILVER LAKE.

on the banks of Silver Lake, at the head of Big Cottonwood Canyon. From two lofty mountain peaks and some of the tallest trees surrounding the encampment, the Stars and Stripes had been unfurled, and early in the day the people had assembled in spacious boweries to be addressed by their leaders. Prayer was offered, the choir sang, bands played, cannon roared, and the military performed their evolutions. Dancing, boating, feasting, games, and other innocent amusements followed. While the festivities were at their height, four men rode into camp, seeking the presence of Governor Young.

Three of them were Mayor Smoot, Judson Stoddard, and Porter Rockwell, the Y. X. messengers from the East. Their companion was Judge Elias Smith, postmaster of Salt Lake City.

How the News was Received.—Governor Young, upon receiving the tidings brought by the messengers, called a council of leading men and laid the subject before them. There was no outward excitement, whatever the inward agitation. The main body of the campers were not even informed until they had assembled for evening prayer, when General Wells at the Governor's request spoke to them briefly, giving the news and instructing them as to the order in which they should leave the camp-ground next morning. Benediction was then pronounced, and the assemblage dispersed.

To the community at large, the warlike rumor could not but be of an exciting character. The announcement that a hostile army was approaching would have been startling at any time, but on that day of days, when the people were praising God for their deliverance from past sorrows and their establishment in a land of peace, it came with tenfold force. As interpreted by them, it meant another attempt to despoil them and drive them from their hard-earned homes.

Extreme Views.—This was an extreme view, but no more extreme than the view taken by the Government relative to a rebellion in Utah. The avowed object of the National Authorities was to give the new executive and his fellow officers a military arm to protect and assist them in the performance of their duties. Those officers, aided by the troops, were not to create chaos, but to restore order; not to make war upon the people, but to preserve peace and maintain the supremacy of law.* Such, however, was the tension of those times that

*The instructions to the commander of the Expedition contained these sentences: "The community, and, in part, the civil government of Utah Territory are in a state of substantial rebellion against the laws and authority of the United States. A new civil Governor is about to be designated, and to be charged with the establishment and maintenance of law and order. Your able and energetic aid, with that of the troops to be placed under your command, is relied upon to secure the success of his mission." "If the Governor of the Territory, in the United States Marshals and other proper officers, inadequate for the preservation of the public peace and the due execution of the laws, should make requisition upon you for a military force to aid him as a posse comitatus in the performance of that official duty, you are hereby directed to employ for that purpose the whole or such part of your command as may be required; or should the Governor, the Judges, or Marshals of the Territory find it necessary directly to summon a part of your troops, to aid either in the performance of his du-

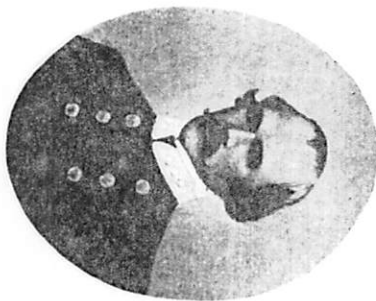
the citizens could not be convinced that the army meditated anything but evil. Knowing that they were not in rebellion, and that there was no need of troops to restore or maintain order, they took the view most natural under the circumstances. It looked to them like a movement for their destruction.

Resistance Determined Upon.—They resolved that such an event should not be. Self-defense was a duty as well as a right. They determined to oppose the troops, and prevent them if possible from entering Salt Lake Valley. But while holding back the arm lifted (as they believed) to strike, they proposed to acquaint the Government with the true situation, hoping that a peaceful and friendly adjustment of differences would follow. If this hope failed, they would lay waste their farms and fields, set fire to their towns and villages, and retire into the mountains or into the southern wilderness.

Governor Young's Position.—It was no part of Governor Young's purpose to resist the installation of his successor. While disgusted with the conduct of some of the officials sent from the East to represent the Government in Utah—"broken down political hacks," he called them, referring, of course, to men of the Judge Brochus and Judge Drummond stamp, men of corrupt lives, flaunting and even boasting of their immorality; while he had no admiration for such characters, he still recognized the source of their authority, and had no thought of rebelling against the Government. He did not oppose the coming of the newly-appointed Federal officers; he opposed only the troops and what he feared would result from their entry into the Territory. Not having received from the Government any notice of the sending of the army, and knowing nothing of the instructions given to its commander, he could only judge of what it intended doing, in Utah, by the bitter memory of things done in Missouri and Illinois, when the mobs and militia of those States made common cause and undertook to "restore peace" in the "Mormon" cities and settlements—a "peace" synonymous with "desolation." Said he, "The United States is sending its armies here to hold us still until a mob can come and butcher us, as has been done before." "Liars have reported that this people have committed treason, and upon their misrepresentations the President has ordered out troops to assist in officering this Territory." "We have transgressed no law, neither do we intend to do so; but as for any ties, you will take care that the summons be promptly obeyed. And in no case will you, your officers or men, attack any body of citizens, whatever, except on such requisition or summons, or in sheer self-defense."

nation coming to destroy this people, God Almighty being my helper, it shall not be."^{*}

The Expedition and its Commander.—The Army for Utah, twenty-five hundred choice troops, splendidly officered and equipped, set out for the West in the summer of 1857. Their commander, Albert Sidney Johnston, was a brilliant soldier, who had been spoken of as the probable successor to the aged General Winfield Scott. Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army. When ordered to Utah, Johnston was a colonel of cavalry and pay-master in the military service. Later, he was made a brigadier general. The command of the Expedition had first been given to General W. S. Harney, then in charge at Fort Leavenworth; but just before the time came to start he was ordered to remain in Kansas and operate for peace in that distracted State. Johnston received his appointment late in August, and immediately repaired to Fort Leavenworth.



GENERAL JOHNSTON.

The March Begins.—The vanguard of the troops, comprising eight companies of the Tenth Regiment and the entire Fifth Regiment of Infantry, under Colonel E. B. Alexander, moved westward on the 18th of July, and a few weeks later the two remaining companies of the Tenth Infantry, under Colonel C. F. Smith, followed. The artillery—Phelps' and Reno's batteries—went with the infantry. The cavalry, six companies of the Second Dragoons under Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, started on the 16th of September. This was the same Colonel Cooke who had commanded the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War. With him traveled Governor Alfred Cumming and other recently-appointed Federal officers. General Johnston and staff, with a detachment of forty dragoons, in light spring wagons left the frontier post one day behind Colonel Cooke. Several large supply trains and herds of cattle for the army had been upon the plains since June or July. The expedition

^{*}The Governor's apprehension of intended violence on the part of the Federal troops was partly based upon a widespread hostile sentiment to the effect that the Utah Expedition ought to take possession of the "Mormon" country, kill or imprison the men, and confiscate the women. Ribald expressions to this effect were upon the lips of many of the soldiers and camp followers while on their march to the Territory.

was destined to cost the Government between fifteen and twenty million dollars.

Utah's First "Gentle" Executive.—Governor Cumming, who was about to succeed Governor Young, was a native of Georgia, and had served the Nation in an official capacity among the Indians on the Upper Missouri. He was appointed to this Territory on the 11th of July, 1857. A true southern gentleman of the old type, chivalrous, brave, fair-minded, and withal conservative, his selection at that critical period to preside over our troubled commonwealth proved in many ways most fortunate.

Captain Van Vliet.—The first person to enter Utah from the ranks of the Expedition was Captain Stewart Van Vliet, of the Commissary Department. He was guided by two "Mormon" scouts, having left his own escort at Han's fork, one hundred and forty-three miles distant. The date of the Captain's arrival at Salt Lake City was the 8th of September. His object in coming was to ascertain whether forage and fuel could be purchased for the troops while quartered within the Territory. In his official report to Captain Pleasanton, Assistant Adjutant General, Van Vliet said:

"Immediately upon my arrival I informed Governor Young that I desired an interview, which he appointed for the next day. On the evening of the day of my arrival Governor Young, with many of the leading men of the city, called upon me at my quarters. The Governor received me most cordially, and treated me during my stay, which continued some six days, with the greatest hospitality and kindness. In this interview he made known to me his views with regard to the approach of the United States troops, in plain and unmistakable language. * * * The next day, as agreed upon, I called upon the Governor and delivered in person the letter with which I had been entrusted. That interview, and in several subsequent ones, the same determination to resist to the death the entrance of the troops into the valley was expressed by Governor Young and those about him. The Governor informed me that there was abundance of everything I required for the troops, such as lumber, forage, etc., but that none would be sold to us.

"In the course of my conversations with the Governor and the influential men of the Territory, I told them plainly and frankly what I conceived would be the result of their present course. I told them that they might prevent the small military force now approaching Utah from getting through the narrow defiles and rugged passes of the mountains this year, but that next season the United States Government would send troops sufficient to overcome all opposition. The answer to this was invariably the same: 'We are aware that such will be the case; but when those troops arrive they will find Utah a desert. Every house will be burned to the ground, every tree cut down, and every field laid waste. We have three years' provisions on hand, which we will cache, and then take to the mountains and bid defiance to all the powers of the Government.'

"I attended their services on Sunday, and, in course of a sermon delivered by Elder Taylor, he referred to the approach of the troops

and declared they should not enter the Territory. He then referred to the probability of an overpowering force being sent against them, and desired all present who would apply the torch to their buildings, cut down their trees, and lay waste their fields, to hold up their hands. Every hand, in an audience numbering over four thousand persons, was raised at the same moment. During my stay in the city I visited several families, and all with whom I was thrown looked upon the present movement of the troops toward their Territory as the commencement of another religious persecution, and expressed a fixed determination to sustain Governor Young in any measures he might adopt. From all these facts I am forced to the conclusion that the Governor and the people of Utah will prevent, if possible, the Army for Utah from entering their Territory this season. This, in my opinion, will not be a difficult task, owing to the lateness of the season, the smallness of our force, and the defenses that nature has thrown around the Valley of the Great Salt Lake."

Bloodshed Deprecated.—Captain Van Vliet became convinced that the people of Utah had been grossly misrepresented, and he expressed the belief that the Government would send an investigating committee to the Territory. Governor Young replied: "I believe God sent you here, and that good will grow out of it. I was glad when I heard you were coming. If we can keep the peace this winter, I feel sure that something will occur to prevent the shedding of blood."

A Deplorable Deed.—The irony of fate was never more painfully manifest than at that particular period. While these hopeful and humane sentiments were being uttered in Northern Utah, there was perpetrated, in a far away southern corner of the Territory, a most horrible deed—the Mountain Meadows massacre, at once the most tragic and most deplorable event in the history of the commonwealth. It occurred on the 11th of September, while Captain Van Vliet was still at Salt Lake City; but the news did not reach this point until nearly three weeks later. Even then the awful tale was not fully told. It was not a day of railroads and telegraphs, and the scene of the crime was three hundred miles from the Territorial capital, in an Indian country, beyond the outskirts of civilization.

XIII.

THE MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE.

1857.

A Crime Against Utah.—The massacre at Mountain Meadows was not only a crime against its immediate victims; it was a crime against the commonwealth, whose fair fame was thus dragged in the mire, and whose people, through persistent misrepresentation, have been made to suffer unjustly the odium of a deed which all classes alike execrate and deplore. Limited space precludes here an exhaustive treatment of the subject, but the main facts connected with the terrible tragedy are as follows.

Emigrants for California.—About the time the news reached Utah that an army was marching toward the Territory, for the avowed purpose of suppressing what the Federal Administration styled "a state of substantial rebellion against the laws and authority of the United States," there arrived at Salt Lake City two companies of emigrants, one from Arkansas, and the other from Missouri, both on their way to Southern California. The Arkansas company was led by Captain Fancher, and the Missouri company by Captain Dukes. Fancher's train seems to have been made up for the most part of respectable and well-to-do people, but along with them went a rough and reckless set of men calling themselves "Missouri Wild Cats." The latter were a boisterous lot, and their conduct was probably one of the chief causes of the calamity that came upon them and their betters.

The "Missouri Wild Cats."—This "rough and ready" element is mentioned by Mr. Stenhouse ("Rocky Mountain Saints," pp. 424-428) as forming a party distinct from the Arkansas company. This upon information imparted to him by a gentleman friend, whom Mrs. Stenhouse, in her book ("Tell it All," p. 325) identifies as Eli B. Kelsey, who traveled with the emigrants from Fort Bridger to Salt Lake City. But Bancroft, the Western historian, discredits this statement (History of Utah, p. 545, Note 3), and gives credence to an account published in Hutchings' California Magazine (IV. 345) to the effect that "there were a few Missourians in the Arkansas party."*

*Mrs. Stenhouse, in her reference to Kelsey, says: "If I remember rightly, he said that the train was divided into two parts," a qualification indicating that the Stenhouses were not quite sure of what Kelsey had told them on this point. The truth appears to be, as Mr. Bancroft states, that there were Missourians in the Arkansas party; and this